

May 6 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1995

I got here, and we're going to keep working at it until we do much, much better.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Map Room at the White House.

Remarks to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee Policy Conference May 7, 1995

Thank you. If I had really good judgment, I would stop now while I'm ahead. *[Laughter]* You're not supposed to clap for that. *[Laughter]*

Thank you, Steve, for that wonderful introduction and for your leadership. Mr. Prime Minister, Ambassador Rabinovich, the Israeli Minister of Health, Larry Weinberg and Lester Pollack and Neal Sher and members of our administration who are here, Mr. Lake and Ambassador Indyk, Secretary Glickman. I can't help pointing out that we have been a country now for a very long time, and the Jewish people have a special relationship with the soil; Dan Glickman is the first Jewish-American Secretary of Agriculture in the history of the Republic. I'm also delighted to see one of the best friends Israel has in the United States, Senator Frank Lautenberg, out there in the audience. It's good to see you, Senator.

I'm delighted to be here tonight among so many familiar faces and to have Steve remind me of that remarkable occasion I had to meet with this group in 1989. I first spoke with an AIPAC group in my home State, in Arkansas, 5 years before that. I thank so many of you here for your support and your counsel. And I am deeply honored to be the first sitting President ever to address this conference.

There are many things for which I could express my thanks to AIPAC. I would like to begin by thanking you for having all these students here tonight. I think that's a wonderful—*[applause]*—thank you. Thank you. I must say, when we came out to such a nice, enthusiastic reception, and the Prime Minister and I were standing here and they started shouting, "Four more years," Steve whispered in my ear. He said, "Do you think they're talking about you or Prime Minister Rabin?" *[Laughter]* And it wasn't so many years ago when we could have voted the students in both places in my home

State, but we've changed that now, so you'll have to decide. But I'm glad to have you here.

I want to thank you for helping to make the partnership between the United States and Israel what it is today. I want to thank you for understanding, by the enormous response you gave to the Prime Minister, the incredibly pivotal role he has played in making that partnership what it is by having the courage to take the risks he has taken to make a lasting peace. Few individuals that I have ever met have risen to the challenge of history as he has.

He could well have been content simply to be a member of the heroic generation that defended Israel at its birth and then to have risen to lead the Israeli military in preserving its strength against all odds. But instead, he has shepherded the Jewish state into a new era. And I am persuaded that no matter what happens in the days and weeks and months ahead, there will be no turning back, thanks in large measure to Prime Minister Rabin.

He has sacrificed many things large and small to make this relationship work and to pursue the peace. He has, for example, endured the ban on smoking at the White House. *[Laughter]* But I want you to know something else. When we first met, as I have said over and over again, he was looking at me and I was looking at him, and he was sort of sizing me up, and I already knew he was bigger than life. *[Laughter]* I said, "If you will take risks for peace, my job is not to tell you what to do, how to do it, or when to do it, it is to minimize those risks." That is what I have tried to do.

I can tell you something, my fellow Americans: If they were easy, somebody would have done it before. Anytime a leader takes on an issue this fraught with difficulty, this full of emotion, where every day and every way even the leader must sometimes have mixed feelings about the decisions that have to be made, that

requires a level of fortitude and vision most people in any elected democracy cannot muster. You have to be willing to watch your poll ratings go up and down like a bouncing ball. You have to be willing to be misunderstood. You have to be willing to know that no matter what you do, if it is all right, things beyond your control could still make it turn out all wrong. And if you do it anyway because you know that it is the only honorable course for the long-term interests of your people, that is true statesmanship. And that is what the Prime Minister has done.

I would like to ask your leave for a moment to discuss one other issue before I return to the Middle East. This weekend I have been working on two major areas of foreign policy: first of all, preparing for the very good meeting I just finished with the Prime Minister and, secondly, getting ready for the upcoming trip I will take to Moscow and Kiev. Tomorrow marks the 50th anniversary of the victory of the Allied forces in World War II in Europe. We will mark that day here in a very moving and wonderful ceremony. Then I will get on the plane and travel to Moscow and then to Kiev to honor the sacrifices in that war of the peoples of Russia and the Newly Independent States.

Five decades ago, the people of the United States and the then Soviet Union joined together to oppose an evil unmatched in our history. In that conflict, 27 million Russians lost their lives—or members of the Soviet republic. They were soldiers and citizens; there were untold tens of thousands of women and children; they were Russians and Belarussians, Uzbeks and Jews, Ukrainians, Armenians, and more. Death touched every family. The siege of one city took a million lives in 900 days. This week we will honor that almost unimaginable sacrifice.

But the trip also gives us a chance to look forward. Just as we fought five decades ago for our common security against the common evil, today we can fight for our common security by striving for common good. Fundamentally, this trip is about making the American people more secure and giving them a better future.

We've always based our policies from the beginning of our administration on a sober assessment of the challenges faced by these nations and a conviction that cooperation was in our best interests. We supported the forces of openness, democracy, and reform in Russia for one

reason above all: It is good for the American people and good for the rest of the world.

In the last 2 years, that policy has made every American safer. It's helped Russia become a partner for trade, investment, and cooperation and to assume its rightful place among the nations of the world. We've got some concrete benefits to show for it. Some of you may not know this, but because of the agreement made last year between the United States and Russia, for the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age, there are no Russian missiles pointed at the citizens of the United States.

We're destroying thousands of nuclear weapons at a faster rate than our treaties require. We have removed nuclear weapons from Kazakhstan, and Ukraine and Belarus soon will follow. We're cooperating with the Russians to prevent nuclear weapons and bomb-making materials from falling into the hands of terrorists and smugglers. We're working together to extend indefinitely the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. For the first time in half a century, there are no Russian troops in Central Europe or the Baltics. Almost 60 percent of the Russian economy is now in private hands, and the elements of a free society—elections, open debate, and a strong, independent media, whether the politicians like it or not—are beginning to take root.

Compared with only a few years ago, when severe disagreements with Moscow paralyzed our relations and threatened nuclear confrontation, we live in safer, more hopeful times because of this extraordinary opening to new freedom in Russia.

Of course, ultimately, the fate of this country, like every other, lies in the hands of its own people. And there is still a struggle between the proponents of reform and the forces of reaction. Peaceful, democratic change is not inevitable, and the forces of reform will suffer setbacks. But after all, that's no different from what happens in any democracy. The forces of hope and fear are not always in the proper balance.

Nonetheless, in the struggle for freedom, the engagement and support of the West, and especially the United States, can make an important difference. So more than ever, we have to engage and not withdraw. We will have our differences with Russia, but even our differences today occur in a different context. The movement of the relationship is plainly toward increasing democracy and increasing security. The

interests of our people are clearly best supported by supporting that transition in Russia to a more free and open society. When we have similar goals, we'll cooperate. When we disagree, as we do and we will, we must manage those differences openly, constructively, and resolutely.

The war in Chechnya, where continued fighting can only spill more blood and further erode international support for Russian reform, is a case in point. And Russia's cooperation with Iran is another.

All of you know that Iran, a country with more than enough oil to meet its energy needs, wants to buy reactors and other nuclear technology from Russia. This fact, together with other evidence about Iran's nuclear program, supports only one conclusion: Iran is bent on building nuclear weapons.

I believe Russia has a powerful interest in preventing a neighbor, especially one with Iran's track record, from possessing these weapons. Therefore, if this sale does go forward, Russian national security can only be weakened in the long term. The specter of an Iran armed with weapons of mass destruction and the missiles to deliver them haunts not only Israel but the entire Middle East and, ultimately, all the rest of us as well.

The United States, and I believe all the Western nations, have an overriding interest in containing the threat posed by Iran. Today Iran is the principal sponsor of global terrorism, as the Prime Minister has said. It seeks to undermine the West and its values by supporting the murderous attacks of the Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, and other terrorist groups. It aims to destroy the Middle East peace process.

You know the need for firm action here as well as I do. And I thank you for your long history of calling attention to Iran's campaign of terror. I thank you for urging a decisive response, and I thank you for supporting the action we have taken. We have worked to counter Iran's sponsorship of terrorism, its efforts to acquire nuclear weapons. We led our G-7 allies to ban weapons sales, tightening trade restrictions on dual-use technology, and in preventing Iran from obtaining credit from international financial institutions. But more has to be done. That's why I ordered an end to all U.S. trade and investment with Iran.

I understand this will mean some sacrifice for American companies and our workers. But the United States has to lead the way. Only

by leading can we convince other nations to join us. I hope you will help us convince other nations to join us.

Let me mention two other nations. We have also taken a strong stand against Libya. We remain determined to bring those responsible for the bombing of Pan Am 103 to trial. And make no mistake about it, though U.N. sanctions have weakened Saddam Hussein, he remains an aggressive, dangerous force. He showed that last October, menacing Kuwait until our Armed Forces' swift and skillful deployment forced him to back down. As long as he refuses to account for Iraqi weapons programs, past and present, as long as he refuses to comply with all relevant Security Council resolutions, we cannot agree and we will not agree to lift the sanctions against Iraq. We will not compromise on this issue, and we value the support we have received from the Prime Minister and the State of Israel.

Our measures to contain these rogue nations are part of a larger effort to combat all those who oppose peace, because even as we achieve great strides in resolving the age-old conflict between Arabs and Israelis, there remains a struggle between those searching for peace and those determined to deny it, between those who want a better future and those who seek a return to the bloody past in the Middle East. No one should doubt the determination of the United States. We will oppose the enemies of peace as relentlessly as we support those who take risks for peace.

Now I want to go over some of the things that the Prime Minister has said because it is important that we be seen as one voice on these issues. As Steve said, before I was elected to office I vowed to be an unshakable supporter of Israel. I have kept that commitment. We have maintained current levels of security and economic assistance. We've made clear to all that our commitment to the security and well-being of the Jewish state is absolutely unwavering and will continue to be. In any agreement, in any agreement Israel concludes with Syria, it will have the means to defend itself by itself. And no child in Kiryat Shemona or Metulla will go to bed afraid for his or her safety.

Today, Israel's military edge is greater than ever because the United States has kept its word. We approved the purchase of F-15-I's for the Israeli Air Force because Israel should have the world's best long-range, multiple-role fighter. We have continued the transfer of 200

fighter aircraft and attack helicopters that began after the Gulf war. We are committing over \$350 million, the major share of development costs, for the Arrow missile system to assure that Israel never again is left defenseless in the face of a missile attack.

We delivered the most advanced multiple-launch rocket system in the world to give Israeli defense forces the firepower they need. And to help enhance Israel's high-tech capabilities, we approved the sale of supercomputers, and we allowed access for the first time to the American space launch vehicle markets.

As you and AIPAC have argued for a decade, this is a two-way relationship that has real benefits for both our nations. Our strategic and intelligence cooperation is now deeper than ever. This year we conducted the largest ever joint military exercise with the IDF. We are pre-positioning more military hardware in Israel. And the Pentagon has signed contracts worth more than \$3 billion to purchase high-quality military products from Israeli companies.

The landmark events of the last 2 years were, in part, possible because the United States worked to ensure Israel's strength, because we helped to give Israel the confidence to make peace by minimizing those risks, because we built a relationship of trust, and because we made it clear that no one could drive a wedge between us. And, Mr. Prime Minister, as long as I'm here, no one will ever drive a wedge between us.

But we have a new problem here at home to which others have alluded. Here in the United States and in positions of authority, there are those who claim to be friends of Israel and supporters of peace and people who believe they are friends of Israel and supporters of peace, whose efforts would make Israel less safe and peace less likely. Under the cover of budget cutting, back-door isolationists on the left and the right want to cut the legs off of our leadership in the Middle East and around the world. They want to deny the United States the resources we need to support allies who take risks for peace.

Legislation being prepared in Congress could reduce by as much as 25 percent our foreign policy spending, which is now just a little over one percent of the Federal budget and is clearly, as a percentage of our income, by far the smallest of any advanced nation in the world. We did not win the cold war to walk away and

blow the peace on foolish, penny-wise, pound-foolish budgeting.

Consider this: Everybody is happy that we're helping Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan get rid of nuclear weapons on their territory. That makes us safer. But we can't do it for free. We're helping to build democracy in Central and Eastern Europe, but we can't do that for free. We're combating the international flow of drugs that plagues our communities, but we can't do that for free.

All over the world, in countries that are desperately poor, people are trying to learn how to support themselves and to sustain their environment so that they can have orderly societies and be part of peaceful cooperation and not be consumed by the radical currents sweeping across the world. And for a pittance, by American standards, we can make all the difference in the world. But we cannot do it for free.

More than any audience in this country, perhaps, you understand that. You understand the importance of our leadership and the reasonable price we must pay to sustain it. If we have to abandon that role simply because we are denied the tools of foreign aid and security assistance, one of the first to be affected is Israel, because Israel is on the frontline of the battle of freedom and peace, and Israel's strength is backed by America's strength and our global leadership.

There may be some who say, "Well, I'm going to cut all this, but I'll protect bilateral assistance to Israel." Ask the Prime Minister. Even if that is done, other budget cuts would threaten our efforts to help Israel reach a lasting peace with its neighbors, because those efforts depend upon our ability to support everybody who takes risks for peace. If we renege on our commitments to Egypt, to Jordan, to the Palestinians, we will never convince anybody else that we will stand behind our commitments. We cannot do it. We must not do it.

I thank you for your vision in supporting debt relief for Jordan. We need that kind of support to help the risk takers, including the Palestinian Authority, demonstrate to their people that peace does bring benefits, that it promises a better life for themselves and for their children. The price we pay for these programs, I say again, is small compared to their benefits.

So I ask you to help me to win bipartisan support to preserve American leadership, to prevent the isolationists from risking all that was

achieved in the cold war and its aftermath. And I ask you to do something else when you go home. Survey after survey after survey show that if you ask the American people what are we spending on foreign aid and welfare, poll after poll after poll says we're spending somewhere between 40 and 50 percent of our budget on foreign aid and welfare. The truth is, we're spending a nickel of our budget on foreign aid and welfare—all of our foreign assistance programs probably define a little over 2 cents in the budget; our direct welfare programs, about 3 cents. If the American people knew the facts, they would support these endeavors. If they understood that of the 22 wealthiest countries in the world, we are dead last in the percentage of our income and the percentage of our national budget going to these programs, they would not walk away from this.

So when you go home, don't just lobby Congress. Write your folks in the local newspaper, call in to some of those talk radio shows from time to time, and tell the American people the truth.

Let me say just a few words about where we are now in the Middle East. The conflict of decades will not end with the stroke of a pen, or even two pens, but consider how far we have come. No one who was there will ever forget that brilliant day on the White House lawn when Prime Minister Rabin and Chairman Arafat resolved to end their conflict. No one who was there will ever forget the magnificent ceremony in the Arava on the ground at the Patriarch's Walk when Israel and Jordan made peace after 46 years. Those were two of my proudest moments as President. They should be two of every American's proudest moments for our country in the last 2 years.

There is a constituency for peace in the Middle East growing stronger and stronger. Thanks in large measure to the tireless efforts of Secretary Christopher, Israel and Syria are engaged in serious, substantive negotiations on the terms of a treaty which can both secure another of Israel's borders and put an end to the entire conflict. A number of Arab countries, Morocco, Tunisia, Oman, Qatar, have begun to normalize relations with Israel. We have begun to dismantle the Arab boycott, and I think we'll see its end before too long. I will not rest until we do see the end of the boycott. It is high time, and it should be ended.

I think all of you know that peace requires more than treaties. It surely requires economic progress. We are moving aggressively on this front. We're continuing to provide the \$10 billion in loan guarantees so Israel can absorb the 600,000 emigrants from the former Soviet Union and finance the investment and infrastructure it needs for a growing economy. We are cooperating to turn cutting-edge technologies into new products and to create new jobs for our nations, working to create a Middle East development bank, encouraging development in Israel and Jordan that will generate good new jobs, starting to attack the economic discontent of Egypt's young where extremism has its roots.

After all these efforts, and for all the energy the Israelis, Arabs, and Americans have devoted to the cause, the circle of peace is not yet closed. And the dream of the day when all Israelis are truly secure in their homes and free from fear is not yet fulfilled. The closer we come to achieving that peace, the more desperate and fanatical become the enemies of peace.

In the wake of the tragedy in Oklahoma City, about which the Prime Minister spoke so eloquently, I think our Americans now feel more strongly than ever and understand more clearly than ever the sense of horror and outrage at terrorism, at the bus bombings, the attacks on soldiers, the killings in the streets of Jerusalem. The cost of all this inhumanity and cowardice has been appalling. We grieve with the families of the victims. We thank the Prime Minister for going to see the family of Alicia Flatow, and we honor the memories of Alicia and Corporal Waxman and so many others.

We are encouraging Chairman Arafat to continue and to intensify his efforts to crack down on extremists. He is now taking concrete steps to prosecute those who plan and carry out acts of violence. These measures and others to confront terror and establish the rule of law must be continued. The peace will never succeed without them.

As I said in the Knesset last fall, the enemies of peace will not succeed, because they are the past, not the future. We will continue to do everything in our power to make that statement true.

But we face today in the Middle East, in Russia, and throughout the world a whole set of new challenges in a new era. The global economy, the explosion of information, the in-

credible advance of technology, the rapid movement of information, and people, all these forces are bringing us into a more integrated world. They prod people, on the one hand, to realize that it makes sense to stop killing each other and to make peace and to start working together, whether that's in the Middle East or Northern Ireland or Southern Africa. That means that the next century can be the most exciting time, the time most full of human possibility in all history.

But we also know that all these forces of integration have a dark side as well, for they make us vulnerable in new ways to organized destruction and evil, in terrorism terms and in terms of proliferating weapons of mass destruction. We see that not only at the terrible tragedy in Oklahoma City or the World Trade Center or the streets of Israel, we also see it in the subway stations of Japan. The more open and flexible our people become, the more we move around and relate to each other, the more vulnerable we will be, and the more vigilant we must become.

In the Middle East, as nowhere else, these two forces of integration and disintegration are locked in a deadly struggle: a strong Israel, backed by a strong America, building peace with its neighbors, a new openness in the region, but on the other side, these continuing des-

perate attempts of fanatics eager to keep old and bloody conflicts alive.

We can beat them. We must beat them. But we are going to have to work at it. We cannot grow weak. We cannot grow weary. And we cannot lose our self-confidence. If we give up on the peace, if we give up on our freedoms, if we walk away from what we are and what we can become, in the United States, Japan, the former Soviet Union, but most of all in the Middle East, then they will have won, even if we defeat them.

So I ask you in closing, stand for the forces of the future. Stand with this brave man in his attempts to make peace. And let's don't stop until the job is done.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 p.m. at the Sheraton Washington. In his remarks, he referred to Steve Grossman, president, Larry Weinberg, chairman emeritus, and Neal Sher, executive director, American Israel Public Affairs Committee; Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Health Minister Efraim Sneh of Israel; Itamar Rabinovich, Israeli Ambassador to the United States; Lester Pollack, chairman, Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations; Martin Indyk, U.S. Ambassador to Israel; and Hamas kidnapping victim Cpl. Nahshon Waxman.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Additional Economic Sanctions Against Iran

May 6, 1995

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On March 15, 1995, I reported to the Congress that, pursuant to section 204(b) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1703(b)), and section 301 of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1631), I exercised my statutory authority to declare a national emergency to respond to the actions and policies of the Government of Iran and to issue an Executive order that prohibited United States persons from entering into contracts for the financing or the overall management or supervision of the development of petroleum resources located in Iran or over which Iran claims jurisdiction.

Following the imposition of these restrictions with regard to the development of Iranian petroleum resources, Iran has continued to engage in activities that represent a threat to the peace and security of all nations. I have now taken additional measures to respond to Iran's continuing support for international terrorism, including support for acts that undermine the Middle East peace process, as well as its intensified efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction. I have issued a new Executive order and hereby report to the Congress pursuant to the above authorities and section 505(c) of the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985 (22 U.S.C. 2349aa-9(c)).